

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5243

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As of February 28, 2013

**Title:** An act relating to establishing policies to support academic acceleration for high school students.

**Brief Description:** Establishing policies to support academic acceleration for high school students.

**Sponsors:** Senators Litzow, Dammeier, Tom, Harper, Hobbs, Delvin, Hewitt, Padden, Mullet and Shin.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/30/13, 2/01/13, 2/08/13 [DPS-WM, w/oRec].

Ways & Means: 2/26/13.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5243 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Litzow, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; Billig, Brown, Cleveland, Fain, Hill, Mullet and Rivers.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator McAuliffe, Ranking Member.

**Staff:** Eric Wolf (786-7405)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Staff:** Elise Greef (786-7708)

**Background:** Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs allow students to take college-level courses while staying on their high school campuses. For both of these programs, students complete courses taught by high school teachers and take standardized examinations at the end of each course. College credit is awarded dependent upon a student's score on the exam. Minimum scores to qualify for college credit vary by college and by subject area. Alternatively, high school students may earn college credit by

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successfully completing a Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education, by completing a course through the College in the High School program, or through a tech-prep course.

In November 2010, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) released a report regarding student participation in dual credit programs. Dual credit programs allow high school students to begin earning college credits while still in high school. An analysis of students' schedules for the 2009-10 school year, as reported in the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System show that 10.9 percent of all high school courses taken can earn dual credit. Whether or not a student will leave high school with a full year of postsecondary credit will vary depending on the subject matter and program requirements in each apprenticeship program or institution of higher education.

**Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute):** Academic Acceleration Policy. By September 1, 2013, each school district board must adopt an academic acceleration policy that automatically enrolls any student meeting the state standard on the high school statewide student assessment or a district-approved minimum score in any section of the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) in the next most rigorous level of advanced courses offered by the high school. Upon completion of that course, students must then enroll in the next most rigorous level of advanced course, with the objective that students will eventually automatically enroll in dual credit courses. The district must notify students and their parents or guardians of the academic acceleration policy, and provide the parents or guardians the opportunity to opt out of the program on behalf of the student.

Determination of Advanced Course Track. Students who meet the state standard on the high school statewide assessment or the district-approved minimum score on the PSAT section related to mathematics may enroll in advanced courses in mathematics. Students who meet the state standard on the high school statewide assessment on both the reading and writing assessments, or meet the PSAT sections for critical reading skills and writing skills, may enroll in advanced courses in English, social studies, humanities, and other related subjects.

Academic Acceleration Incentive Program (Program). The Program is established, subject to the appropriation of funding. Awards from the Program may be used to support teacher training, curriculum, technology, examination fees, and other costs associated with offering dual credit courses to high school students. OSPI will direct half of the appropriated funding for the award to schools in the bottom 25 percent of enrollment in dual credit classes for the purpose of encouraging higher enrollment. The remaining half of the appropriated funding will be awarded to schools that finish in the top 10 percent of growth of enrollment in dual credit programs. Students enrolled in the Running Start Program and students taking online courses at no cost to the student do not generate incentive awards.

Collection of Data on Dual Credit Courses. The proposed legislation directs OSPI to post on the Washington State Report Card website the rates at which high school students earn college credit through dual credit courses.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute):** PSAT Scores Qualify Students for Academic Acceleration. The bill directs districts to approve a minimum threshold score students must

receive on the PSAT in order to become enrolled in an accelerated program, as an alternative to scores on the state high school assessment test. Students who meet the minimum threshold score in the critical reading skills and writing skills sections of the PSAT are eligible for enrollment in advanced courses in English, social studies, humanities, and other related subjects. Students who meet the minimum threshold score in the mathematics skills section of the PSAT are eligible for enrollment in advanced courses in mathematics and science.

Career and Technical Education (CTE). CTE classes that satisfy the dual enrollment and class performance requirements to earn college credit are added to the list of classes which may count as dual credit classes for the purposes of the incentive award program.

Modification to the Academic Acceleration Incentive Award Program. Modifies the academic acceleration incentive award program so that OSPI allocates half of the funds appropriated for the program to school districts for the purpose of promoting the growth of enrollment in dual credit courses. Schools falling into the lowest quartile of high schools in dual credit enrollment rates will receive funding. The second half of the allocated funding will be distributed to schools based on their growth in enrollment of dual credit earning students. Awards will be distributed to schools finishing in the top 10 percent of growth in dual credit earning students statewide.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** PRO: Music students need rigorous mathematics and English training in addition to their music studies. In the 21st century economy and workforce, it is essential that American students get a head start. This bill sets students on a pathway to meet those challenges. In Federal Way, policy was enacted with great success, doubling enrollment in dual credit programs and reflecting the diversity of the district. Of minority students, 76 percent more enroll in dual credit programs and 94 percent receive a C or better in their first semester grades. The effort in Federal Way rises above others and achieves remarkable results. Advanced courses improve students' confidence by exposing them to advanced work thereby better preparing them for college. For a lot of kids whose families aren't engaged with school, this program will help reengage the students. The accelerated program is actually a tremendous parental engagement tool. The program is wildly successful, and enrollment has increased 200 percent from 2009, and 1400 percent among the minority population. We are sending the message that we believe in the students and that we believe they can succeed. We have had institutional sorting, elitism, and racism in our schools for years, favoring Caucasian and Asian kids for enrollment into advanced classes.

CON: This bill leaves behind kids in nontraditional programs, and limits the other programs for those students because the school day is too short. The school day should be lengthened by a period to accommodate both the alternative programs and dual-credit programs. English

language learners, special needs, and challenged kids need options, not to be forced into state-mandated education regimes. Local school boards should retain the ability to determine how to best serve their students. The Legislature should focus instead on fully funding ESHB 2261 and the *McCleary* decision. The challenge is getting teachers prepared to teach the course and realizing higher enrollment numbers. There are significant startup costs on the front end. Automatically enrolling students into AP and IB will reduce enrollment in electives and technical programs. This forces students into a course track that will not allow them to develop CTE expertise. To make this a non-local choice is not a good option. If this bill goes forward, more technical and CTE courses should be included in the bill.

**Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** PRO: Dave Powell, Stand for Children; Robert Neu, Tony Moore, Federal Way Public Schools; Rosalund Jenkins, League of Education Voters, Black Education Strategy Roundtable; Frank Ordway, League of Education Voters; Anne Luce, Partnership for Learning, WA Roundtable.

CON: Tim Knue, WA Assn. for CTE; Jerry Bender, Assn. of WA School Principals.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means):** PRO: The bill promotes science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) opportunities to all students. We appreciate the fact that the bill applies to all post-secondary pathways, four-year universities as well as career and technical programs. This bill helps address the opportunity gap between racial and income groups in Washington State by encouraging more participation in advanced and dual-credit courses. Students who take these courses are much more likely to enroll in college upon graduation and it is a cost-effective approach for students to make early progress. In addition, it is cost effective for the state to invest in these programs up front, close the opportunity gap, and avoid costly social-program spending later or benefit from students' successful entry into the middle class. Our school board loves this bill. Our district adopted a high school acceleration program to help close the achievement gap. There is a large disparity among students from different racial and income groups in regard to participation in AP and IB programs. We want all our children to have access to these programs and this bill will help us with implementation. We see this approach as a cost-saving mechanism. If the students graduate and achieve at high levels, it will bear great economic fruits for us in the future. We do have a couple of technical amendments we would like to suggest.

**Persons Testifying (Ways & Means):** PRO: Emily Persky, WA State Board of Education; Dave Powell, Stand for Children; Charlie Brown, Tacoma School District; Karen Vialle, Tacoma School Board.